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Application No. 10/693,961
Amendment dated January 10, 2006
Reply to Office Action of October 11, 2005

Amendments To The Drawings:

The attached sheet of drawings includes new Fig. 6. This sheet, which includes Figs. 5 and 6 replaces the original sheets including Fig. 5.

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- R E M A R K S / A R G U M E N T S -

Claims 1 to 28 remain in the application.

Drawings

As requested by the Examiner, the Applicant herein submits a new Figure 6 showing the path that extends along a parabolic curve as claimed in claim 25. Pages 3 and 6 of the description have been amended to be in line with new Fig. 6.

Specification

The Examiner has objected to informalities in the disclosure. The Applicant thanks the Examiner for this and has provided the appropriate corrections as follows. Specifically, the term "segment" mentioned in paragraph 11, line 2 has been changed to "segments". Also, the term "and" mentioned in paragraph 18, line 5 has been changed to "an". The term "provides" mentioned in paragraph 20, line 2 has been changed to "provide". The term "more than" mentioned in paragraph 21, line 5 has been changed to "greater". The term "allow" mentioned in paragraph 22, line 1 has been changed to "allows". The term "caused" mentioned in paragraph 22, line 3 has been changed to "causes". The expression "and/or have as step changes or other discontinuous" mentioned in paragraph 28, lines 7-8 has been changed to "and/or have step changes or other discontinuities".

Claim objections

The Examiner has objected to informalities in claims 7-12 and 27. The Applicant thanks the Examiner for this and has provided the following appropriate corrections. The Applicant has amended claim 7 to delete the term "and" from the second to last line. Also, the Applicant has amended claim 27 to insert "a" after "of" and after "and" in line 2. Claim 16 has been amended to now depend on independent claim 13 rather than independent claim 1. The Applicant states that new claim 16 is no longer a duplicate of claim 6 and therefore the objection thereto is traversed. All of the above amendments were made for clarification purposes only and do not narrow the scope of the claims.

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Claim rejections – 35 USC § 112

The Examiner has rejected claims 4-5, 8, 11, 14, and 20 on the basis of indefiniteness. The Applicant has amended claims 4, 8, 14 and 20 by replacing the expression “wider at locations subject to higher operating temperatures during normal engine operation.” with the expression “wider at a location subject to a higher operating temperature during normal engine operation than a location subject to a lower operating temperature during normal engine operation.” as suggested by the Examiner. Therefore, the Applicant believes that the rejections to claims 4, 8, 14 and 20 have been traversed and that claims 5 and 11 are believed to comply with 35 USC § 112 at least in view of their dependency on claims 4 and 8 respectively. These amendments clarify but do not narrow the scope of claims 4, 5, 8, 11, 14 and 20.

Claim rejections – 35 USC § 102

The Examiner has rejected claims 13-15 under 35 USC § 102(b) as being anticipated by Bowers 3,752,598. The Applicant respectfully disagrees with the Examiner's rejection for the following reasons.

Bowers discloses a first stage turbine stator assembly 10, wherein each pair of adjacent shrouds 20 has confronting faces 42 (see figures 2 and 3), the faces 42 being each provided with grooves 44. However, the confronting faces 42 are generally parallel to each other and the intersegment gap on the upstream side (located on the left in figures 2-5) is equal to the intersegment gap on the downstream (located on the right in figures 2-5) of the shroud segments. The plate 50 to which the Examiner refers is disposed within grooves 44 adjacent inner surfaces 46 thereof. A net force on the plate created by the difference in gas pressure in the chamber 36 and in the gas path 28 causes the plate 50 to be pressed against the pair of mutually facing tapered surfaces 46 (page 4, lines 4-11). The tapered surfaces are used to promote a better fit with plate 50 and not for the correction of uneven thermal expansion. Furthermore, there is no gap defined when the plate 50 is pressed against the surfaces 46 under conditions of operating temperatures. It can clearly be seen that Bowers teaches a seal between the plate 50 and the surfaces 46 for preventing radial leakage of fluid and does not teach an expansion joint. The Applicant believes it is unjust to consider a seal comprising a

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plate that can bent to press up against another surface as an expansion joint. The expansion joint taught by Bowers is in fact between the confronting faces 42 whose parallel design makes up the prior art discussed in the background of the invention portion of the present application.

Therefore, the Applicant believes that claims 13-15 are not anticipated by Bowers for all the reasons set forth above. Reconsideration of this rejection is respectfully solicited.

Voluntary claim amendments

The Applicant acknowledges the Examiner's readiness to allow claims 1-3, 6, 17-19, 21-26, and 28, and also claims 7, 9-10, 12, and 27 in view of the corrections brought by the Applicant thereto.

The Applicant has voluntarily amended claim 1 by changing the term "the" before temperature distribution profile to "a" in order to appropriately introduce this term.

The Applicant has voluntarily amended claim 23 by replacing the expression "said one end" in line 2 with "one of said adjacent ends" for clarity purposes only. No new matter has been introduced.

In view of the foregoing, the application is believed to be in condition for allowance and an early action to this effect would be much appreciated.

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The Applicant respectfully requests that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.


Respectfully submitted,

Martin JUTRAS

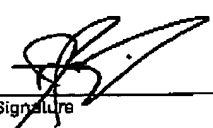
By:

January 10, 2006

Date


T. James REID, Registration No. 56,498
Agent of Record
OGILVY RENAULT LLP
1981 McGill College Avenue, #1600
Montreal, Quebec, Canada H3A 2Y3
Tel.: (514) 847-4311


Encl. - Appendix A (Replacement Drawing(s))

CERTIFICATE OF FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION	
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Application No. 10/693,961
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Replacement Drawing Sheet

APPENDIX A

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